

## CAN SICKLE CELL TRAIT TURN INTO SICKLE CELL DISEASE?

Never. Your baby's hemoglobin gene will not change. It remains the same for life.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY BABY IN THE FUTURE?

Sickle cell trait will not affect your baby's health. When your child grows up, his or her partner should be offered hemoglobin testing before they have children.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY FUTURE CHILDREN?

Having a child with sickle cell trait tells you that one parent (either mother OR father) has one abnormal gene. Hemoglobin testing will tell you if you both have an abnormal hemoglobin gene and if you are at risk to have a baby with sickle cell disease.



**Further information about genetics is available. Please ask your doctor about genetic counseling.**

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON SICKLE CELL TRAIT AND SICKLE CELL DISEASE?

Talk to your doctor or call the Utah Department of Health at (801) 584-8260.



Utah Department of Health  
PO Box 144710  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114  
Phone (801) 584-8256  
Fax (801) 536-0966

<http://health.utah.gov/newbornscreening>

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO



## SICKLE CELL TRAIT

You have just learned that your child has sickle cell trait. Naturally, you are concerned and have many questions.

This brochure will help answer some of your questions. It should not take the place of an informed discussion with your medical home (doctor).

### IS MY BABY SICK?

No. Sickle cell trait is not an illness. It will not make your baby sick.

### WHAT IS SICKLE CELL TRAIT?

Sickle cell trait, like hair color and height, is passed down in the family through genes. Sickle cell trait occurs when a baby gets one normal hemoglobin gene from one parent, and one sickle hemoglobin gene from the other parent. Sickle cell trait is NOT a disease and does not cause health problems.

### WHAT IS HEMOGLOBIN?

Hemoglobin is inside red blood cells and carries oxygen to all parts of the body. It also gives the red blood cell its color. There are many different types of hemoglobin. Your genes determine the type of hemoglobin you have.

### IF SICKLE CELL TRAIT IS NOT A PROBLEM WHY WAS MY BABY TESTED?

In Utah new babies are tested for certain diseases. Your baby was tested to make sure he or she did NOT have sickle cell disease.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO FOR MY BABY?

Your baby does not need treatment. Your baby's medical home (doctor) has been notified of these test results. You might want to talk to your doctor in more detail.



### I want to know more...

### WHY IS IT CALLED SICKLE CELL TRAIT?

When a person gets one normal gene from one parent and one abnormal gene from another, it is called a **trait**. If both genes are abnormal, then it is called a disease.

### WHAT EXACTLY IS A GENE?

Genes are tiny bits of information. They form the blueprint for new life. Genes come in pairs. You get one gene from your father and one gene from your mother.

### WHAT IS SICKLE CELL DISEASE?

Sickle cell disease is a disease of red blood cells. Sickle cell disease occurs when a baby gets two sickle cell hemoglobin genes, one from each parent. People with sickle cell disease often have many health problems including infections, pain, and anemia.